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Democratic Senator Responds to Medi-Scare Tactics

Senator Breaux Sets the Record Straight on Medicare

As everyone now knows, the Democrats' budget strategy is to try to defend their President's penchant for spending and opposition to tax cuts. Their number-one plan of attack is to accuse Republicans of hurting Medicare to pay for tax cuts. Needless to say, this is factually inaccurate.

- First, there is no relationship between Medicare and tax cuts because they are funded from entirely separate revenue sources — Medicare Part A is funded by payroll taxes, while tax cuts will come from general revenues.
- Second, the Republican budget resolution fully funds Medicare and allows it to grow by \$200 billion over the next ten years. Contrast that to Clinton's \$19 billion Medicare reduction, and his fraudulent Medicare transfer claim which amounts to nothing more than IOUs but no real money. [For details, see "Clinton 'Sticks Up' Seniors' Medicare for \$19 Billion," 3/24/99, and papers issued on 3/3/99 and 3/15/99.]

But, it's more than inaccurate. It's a strategy that is harmful to Medicare itself. Don't take our word for it: Senator Breaux, the Democratic chairman of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, points out that the President and members of his party are also wrong to try to use Medicare as a political issue. Here is an excerpt from Senator Breaux's statement before the Senate Finance Committee on March 18, 1999:

"I would strongly say, as one Senator, that the issue of Medicare cannot, should not, and must not be a 'wedge' issue. That is old politics and the old way of looking at this problem. Looking at it in that fashion has led us to never solve it with any serious reform since it was passed in 1965. The issue for the 1990s and the 21st century cannot be a tax cut versus saving Medicare. That is an improper statement of the problem facing this Congress. I am for a tax cut, targeted where it can be most helpful, and I am dedicated to trying to save Medicare. Both of them are legitimate things that this Congress needs to address. It is not—not—an either/or situation and should not be made to be so."

Exactly and responsibly. Too bad the President isn't listening.

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